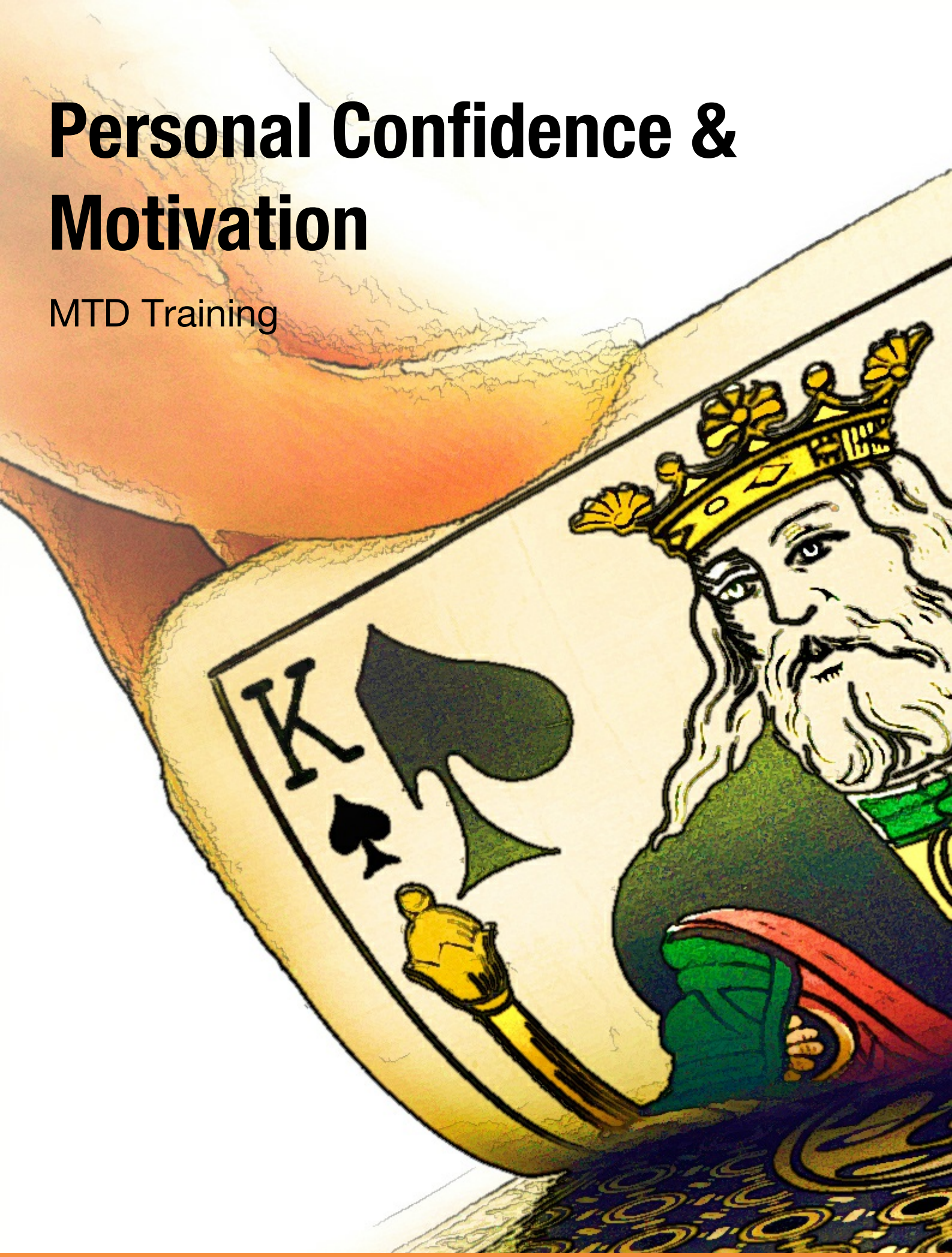
Personal Confidence & Motivation

MTD Training



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PERSONAL CONFIDENCE & MOTIVATION

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Personal Confidence & Motivation
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CONTENTS

	Preface	**6**
1	**Introduction**	**8**
1.1	Personal Confidence and Motivation in the Business World	8
1.2	Personal Confidence	8
1.3	Personal Motivation	9
1.4	Defining Confidence	9
1.5	Defining Motivation	10
1.6	An Overview of this Ebook	10
2	**Theories Regarding Personal Confidence**	**11**
2.1	Introduction	11
2.2	Self-Confidence	11
2.3	Self-Esteem	12
2.4	Self-Efficacy	13

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3	**Theories Regarding Motivation**	**19**
3.1	Introduction	19
3.2	Herzberg's Motivational Theory	19
3.3	Vroom's Expectancy Theory	21
3.4	McCleland's Need-Based Model	23
3.5	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	25
4	**Methods for Improving Self-Confidence**	**30**
4.1	Introduction	30
4.2	10 Tips to Improve Self-Confidence Instantly	30
4.3	Building Self-Esteem at Work	35
4.4	Enhancing Your Self-Efficacy	38
5	**How to Improve Your Motivation**	**41**
5.1	Reasons We Lose Motivation	41
5.2	Building Self-Discipline	43
6	**Personal Change and Goal Setting**	**48**
6.1	Introduction	48
6.2	A Formula for Making Changes	48
6.3	The Process of Change	49
6.4	Setting Goals	51
7	**Resources**	**55**

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PREFACE

Do you have the self belief and confidence to make a difference? Do you "just know" that you'll succeed no matter what?

Do you know what motivates and gets you going? And do you know how to tap into the motivations of other people?

In this textbook you'll find the answers to all of these questions and much more besides! You'll understand how to build your own confidence levels and how to generate confidence in an instant. You'll then move onto the topic of motivation and you'll be able to really understand this area of personal development.

Sean McPheat, the Founder and Managing Director of management development specialists, MTD Training is the author of this publication. Sean has been featured on CNN, BBC, ITV, on numerous radio stations and has contributed to many newspapers. He's been featured in over 250 different publications as a thought leader within the management development and training industry.

MTD has been working with a **wide variety of clients** (both large and small) in the UK and internationally for several years.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PERSONAL CONFIDENCE AND MOTIVATION IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

One of the most commonly debated and researched fields in the business world is motivation. Why do people do what they do and how can we motivate others to do what we need them to do in the business place? If we understand how and why people are motivated, we can encourage them to be their best and do their best at work. The more that people are motivated to be successful and achieve the goals set for them, the more their confidence in their own abilities will grow as well, which can, in turn, make them even more motivated.

But you can also work on your own confidence and motivation in the workplace in order to achieve your goals and intentions. When people are confident and motivated at work, there are many positive factors that result in the workplace:

- Job satisfaction improves
- Effort increases
- Working environment improves
- Results are the focus
- Drive is created
- Everyone's full potential can be tapped
- Everyone is certain of the role they are to fulfill

1.2 PERSONAL CONFIDENCE

We all know people who are confident. They seem to face life's obstacles with a level of calm that is enviable. They get into action to respond to a problem before giving themselves time to dwell or worry too much. Confident people are more successful at work because they have a belief in their own abilities to the point that they feel comfortable handling whatever comes at them. Make a presentation to the board? No problem – the confident person plans and executes the presentation without allowing fear to stop them. When someone is confident, they:

- Focus on their strengths while managing their weaknesses
- Aren't afraid to take risks
- Enjoy challenging themselves and setting high goals
- Seek out self-improvement opportunities
- Aren't afraid to admit when they make a mistake

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- Aren't afraid to acknowledge when they don't know something
- Make good team leaders or mentors
- Can relate to customers or company members at any level of the organization
- Are honest about their shortcomings

1.3 PERSONAL MOTIVATION

All of us have a desire to achieve something in our lives. We want to know that we have achieved something important, of value, of quality, or of meaning. Being motivated to meet our goals means that we are able to:

- Improve our self-confidence
- Enhance our self-discipline
- Set examples for ourselves of what we can achieve
- Challenge ourselves to stretch beyond our perceived limits
- Reward ourselves for reaching our goals
- Enjoy the recognition or perks associated with reaching our goals

The more that we are able to achieve, the more self-confident we become. Then the more self-confident we become, the more we are able to achieve. The reverse can happen if we fail to meet our goals. If we fall short of achieving something, we may experience a dip in our self-confidence levels, which in turn may impact our motivation to try again. Understanding this relationship between motivation and self confidence is important if you want to be able to improve either trait in yourself.

1.4 DEFINING CONFIDENCE

People sometimes confuse confidence with arrogance. The arrogant person is usually actually an insecure person and their arrogance is a way to hide their insecurities. Where an arrogant person is boastful, a confident person has no need to boast – they know that their achievements speak for themselves. Where an arrogant person will have trouble admitting they were wrong, a confident person is perfectly willing to admit when they are wrong – they know that the admission doesn't diminish their value or their abilities. If an arrogant person tends to focus on looking good or appearing to be the best, a confident person focuses on being the best and doing the best.

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1.5 DEFINING MOTIVATION

A simple definition for motivation is that it is a description of a person's motive to action. You can have a low level of motivation to perform an action, for example, if you are taking a long time to complete a project or even to begin it. But if you have drive towards a goal, objective, or target, we talk about you having positive motivation. Those who are highly motivated to achieve things in their lives are also likely to be more fulfilled as they accomplish the things that are important to them in their lives.

1.6 AN OVERVIEW OF THIS EBOOK

This ebook will examine the interactions of self-confidence and motivation so that you are able to use one to enhance the other. We'll examine theories about self-confidence and motivation before looking at ways to improve both. Then we'll look at what's involved in making personal changes and how to set powerful goals that will help you be more successful.

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2 THEORIES REGARDING PERSONAL CONFIDENCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

We all know someone who radiates self-confidence. Think about one of these people that you know in the workplace. What is it that their self-confidence helps them to achieve? Are they more willing to take on responsibility, at ease around their superiors, and able to admit when they have made a mistake?

In this chapter we'll examine the differences between self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, as well as why each one is important in the work-place

Now think about someone at the workplace who does not have a lot of self-confidence. They might be shy, reserved, not willing to get into conversations where they might have to speak to their superiors or speak in front of other people. They might appear unhappy in the workplace, or at least not very excited about what it is that they are doing. Can you see how self-confidence might be important to people in being successful at work?

According to psychological research, there are several theories regarding how a person's self-confidence is important to their well-being and their ability to function in the world at their fullest potential. In this chapter we will look at the differences between self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, and theories about why each is important in the workplace.

2.2 SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence can be boiled down to the belief that a person has it in their ability to succeed at a task, based on whether or not they have been able to perform the task in the past. However, there are actually two aspects of self-confidence. The first is competence, whether or not you have the necessary skills and abilities to complete a task. The second is self-assurance and whether or not you believe that you have the ability to complete the task.

There are two aspects of self-confidence: competence, or whether or not you possess the needed skills to achieve something, and self-assurance, or whether or not you believe that you have the ability to achieve it.

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Think about this for a moment; you might have been trained in interview skills, but you might not feel comfortable in interviews. In this case you would have the competence but lack the self-assurance. On the other hand, you could believe that you have the ability to do something but not have the skills to actually carry it through. In this case you are very self-assured, but you don't have the competence to do the job. True self-confidence occurs when both competence and self-assurance are in balance with each other.

Self-confidence has been shown to be important in recovery from injury, overcoming setbacks, and moving through negative experiences in life. Someone with self-confidence has a belief that they will be able to recover, move past the negative, and again experience the positive. In the business world, self-confidence functions in much the same way. It enables an employee to recover from setbacks and challenges and continue to move forward.

2.3 SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is the capacity to respect and think well of yourself. It means that you appreciate yourself as a unique individual with your own set of skills, talents, and abilities. David Burns defines self-esteem as "the capacity to experience maximal self-love and joy whether or not you are successful at any point in your life."

Psychologist Maxine Elliott has researched self-esteem and realized that people's self-esteem will vary from individual to individual when they are facing a setback. People who have a high level of self-esteem will be able to respond to a damaging event by using their past experience and their coping abilities and will not have much damage to their current level of self-esteem. They will still see themselves as valuable and talented even if the current evidence seems to indicate otherwise.

Self-esteem can be defined as "the capacity to experience maximal self-love and joy whether or not you are successful at any point in your life."

However, most people will experience some loss of self-esteem when they face a negative situation and unfortunately, those who already have low self-esteem will also experience the largest reduction in what little self-esteem they have. In other words, they will see their failure as further proof that they are incapable of being successful. This type of negative cycle will perpetuate itself each time that a person with low self-esteem faces failure, criticism, or roadblocks.

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2.4 SELF-EFFICACY

Albert Bandura is considered an expert on the concept of self-efficacy. He stated that people perceive their own self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. It is concerned not with the skills one has but with the judgments of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses." In other words, self-efficacy is an individual's evaluation of their own ability to be successful in attaining a specific goal.

Self-efficacy is related to our judgments about our own capabilities and what we believe we are or are not able to do with those capabilities.

Bandura stated that the amount of self-efficacy a person has is dependent on their ability to apply coping behaviors, increase their level of effort, and how long they will be able to retain their optimism when facing difficult obstacles and experiences. In addition, he stated that the more a person is tested by facing their fears and stepping outside of their comfort zones, the more they will enhance their sense of self-efficacy.

If a person does not have a base level of self-efficacy, they will be unwilling to attempt a new task or challenge, which could of course hold them back in the workplace. The greater your self-efficacy, the more willing you will be to grow your skills by attempting new challenges – and the less you will be affected if you don't succeed.

2.4.1 SOURCES OF SELF-EFFICACY

There are four main sources that allow people to build their self-efficacy. These are:

- Mastery experiences
- Social models
- Social persuasion
- Emotional states

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Let's look at each one of these individually:

- **Mastery experiences** – this is the most effective way to create a strong sense of self-efficacy for a person. As each success is achieved, the sense of self-efficacy is reinforced. However, a bit of failure is important as well. If people only experience easy successes, they will begin to feel that success is what they should experience every time they make an attempt at something new. Some setbacks are important because they teach us that we need to make a sustained effort to be successful. Still, upsets should not come, if it can be avoided, until a person has had a chance to establish a certain level of self-efficacy.

Once we see ourselves succeed, we are more likely to believe that we can do it again.

- **Social models** – these are examples of others who we see succeed. When we see someone that we feel is similar to ourselves achieve, we will feel that we are likely to be able to follow suit. At the same time, seeing people like ourselves fail despite a level of sustained effort can have a negative impact on our own self-efficacy. These models are most effective, in either case, when they are perceived to have the greatest similarity to ourselves. These models tell us the types and level of competencies to which we should aspire if we want to be successful in the workplace – and in life in general.

We will believe we can do something more readily if we see someone like us achieve it first.

- **Social persuasion** – the old pep talk. When we can persuade someone that they have the competencies and abilities to master an activity, they are more likely to make longer, sustained efforts at achieving success than if they have significant self-doubt. While social persuasion can enhance self-efficacy, it can even more easily diminish it. People tend to easily believe the negative and may decide that they are unqualified to even attempt a task – even if they actually do have the ability to complete it successfully. This factor points to the importance of leaders in an organization to frequently persuade people that they are capable and competent.

We will believe we can do something more readily if we have others tell us that they believe we can do it.

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However, it's important not to persuade someone that they are capable of something when they truly are not. You will simply reinforce any negative self-doubts that a person had – not to mention shaking their faith in you as a leader. If you are a manager, you will need to strike a balance between challenging your employees in order to stimulate their self-confidence and being careful not to set them up in situations where they are sure to fail.

- **Emotional states** – people judge themselves on their emotional reactions to situations as well. If they react with stress and tension, they may interpret those reactions as signs that they are weak or vulnerable. Mood can also affect self-efficacy; a positive mood will enhance it, while a negative mood will diminish it. A work environment that allows opportunities for stress reduction, teaches stress management, and acknowledges stress as a normal part of life rather than a personal weakness will help to foster positive self-efficacy in its employees.

We will judge ourselves based on our emotional reaction to a situation – we may see ourselves as vulnerable or weak if we are too emotional or stressed.

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2.4.2 HOW SELF-EFFICACY AFFECTS FUNCTIONING

There are four major psychological processes that are important when discussing the fact that how a person perceives their self-efficacy can have an impact on their ability to function, perform, and achieve. These four processes are:

- Cognitive processes
- Motivational processes
- Affective processes
- Selection processes

Now we'll look at each of these in detail.

- **Cognitive processes** – we begin to analyze our ability to perform tasks or reach goals during the cognitive process of thought. We will 'rehearse' scenes in our mind or imagine what will happen in a given scenario in an attempt to be prepared for, or even control, the events that will happen in our lives. We draw conclusions, make assumptions, and predict what we think will occur. We then compare the actual results to our predictions and evaluate how well we were able to 'predict' what would happen. If you have higher self-efficacy, you will also be able to manage your analytical thinking processes better under stress than someone who doesn't.

We 'rehearse' what we think will happen in a situation by thinking about it. We then compare the reality of what happens to how well we predicted it.

- **Motivational processes** – since self-motivation is usually generated by thought, our self-efficacy plays a role as well. We use forethought as a way to regulate our motivation by imagining what we believe we can achieve. We then use our cognitive skills to set goals for ourselves and to identify what steps are necessary to achieve those goals. There are actually three different subsets of motivational processes that come under this theory:

  - Causal attributions – in these instances, those with high self-efficacy understand that their failures are a result of low effort, while those with low self-efficacy will see their failures as the result of a lack of ability. Motivation can be affected in either case because in the first, a person will believe that they simply need to try harder, while in the second, a person may believe that it doesn't matter how hard they try.

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- Outcome expectancies – in these situations, a person believes that a certain outcome will result in correspondence to a given behavior. We predict what we will get if we give a certain level of input, assistance, effort, etc. If we have high self-efficacy, we know that we simply have to give the right input to get the desired outcome, and will be motivated by that understanding. If we have low self-efficacy, we either cannot understand what input we need to give or we simply don't think we are capable of giving it.
- Self-influence by goal setting – we will talk more about goal-setting in a later chapter, but this is the idea that we are able to influence our own motivation by setting our own goals and challenges. We will be satisfied if we achieve our goals, and less satisfied if we do not. Again, self-efficacy plays a role because it will affect the level of challenge and goal that we will set for ourselves. If we see the goal as simply a function of the right activity combination, we will set it high when we have high self-efficacy because we will believe we can attain the goal. If we don't have high self-efficacy, we will set low goals for ourselves – if we set them at all.

- **Affective processes** – this element relates to how we perceive our own coping abilities. If we face a difficult situation and have low self-efficacy in this area, we are more likely to experience high levels of stress and depression. If we have a high level of self-efficacy related to our ability to cope, we will be in action around resolving the situation or getting through the difficult scenario rather than getting mired down and stressing over negative outcomes that are either out of our control or are very unlikely to happen. In other words, those with self-efficacy know that they will be capable of handling whatever life throws at them. Those without it will experience a great deal of fear and anxiety and may not be capable of coping with difficulties.

This element relates to how we perceive our own coping abilities. If we believe we have good coping skills, we will actually cope with difficult situations better than if we lack self-efficacy in this area.

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- **Selection processes** – finally, self-efficacy affects us by influencing the decisions that we make for ourselves in our lives. Our level of belief in ourselves and our abilities can shape the environments we choose, the educational path we opt for, and the type of career we pursue as well. If you are in an environment that you are unhappy with, one question to ask yourself is whether or not you chose that position because you didn't believe in yourself enough to push yourself further in your education or the risks you took at work to prove yourself. The higher the level of self-efficacy a person has, the less likely they are to 'settle' in a career that they don't find satisfying.

You want employees with a high level of self-efficacy because it is more likely that they will have actively chosen their current profession and so will be more enthusiastic about it.

Therefore, you want employees with a high level of self-efficacy because it is more likely that they will have actively chosen their current profession and that they will be more interested in it and enthusiastic about it.

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3 THEORIES REGARDING MOTIVATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Since motivation has been so thoroughly studied, there are numerous theories about what motivates us. In this chapter, we'll look at some of the most popular motivational theories to help you build a base of understanding for improving your own motivation.

3.2 HERZBERG'S MOTIVATIONAL THEORY

Frederick Herzberg studied how a worker's work environment would affect his work by causing satisfaction or dissatisfaction. His idea was that if people were satisfied at work, they would be motivated to work, and the opposite would be true if they were dissatisfied at work. He interviewed employees about their feelings at work and then published his findings in 1959 in his book called *The Motivation to Work*.

His theory is also called the motivation-hygiene theory because he considered the factors that satisfied employees to be motivators and those factors that were dissatisfying to be hygiene factors. Hygiene factors being present does not avoid job dissatisfaction, but if you take them away you will find that they can demotivate an employee. Examples might be the loss of a regularly expected pay raise or some decrease in how you perceive your work environment (turning off the air conditioner or no longer allowing personal space heaters). Herzberg identified the top six factors leading to dissatisfaction and the top six factors leading to satisfaction in the workplace. These are listed in order from highest importance to lowest importance in Figure 1 below.

Factors Affecting Job Attitudes	
Leading to Dissatisfaction	Leading to Satisfaction
• Company policy • Supervision • Relationship with boss • Work conditions • Salary • Relationship with peers	• Achievement • Recognition • Work itself • Responsibility • Advancement • Growth

Figure 1: Herzberg's Factors Affecting Job Attitudes

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Herzberg argued that because the list of factors for dissatisfaction and satisfaction are not exact opposites of each other, we cannot assume that simply improving a dissatisfying factor would result in satisfaction – it would simply result in the absence of dissatisfaction. The same could be said if you remove a factor of satisfaction – the result wouldn't necessarily be dissatisfaction, but just the absence of satisfaction. So what does this mean for actions we can take?

Because the list of factors for dissatisfaction and satisfaction are not opposites, we cannot assume that improving a factor of dissatisfaction will lead to satisfaction; it would simply lead to the absence of dissatisfaction.

There is one important distinction to notice when it comes to self-motivation and self-confidence. The factors that tend to bring us the most satisfaction at work, and so we assume, the most motivation, are the ones that we have some control over – and that are most related to our own job performance. If we are focusing on our performance, we will achieve our goals and receive recognition. If we do something we enjoy, that alone can provide satisfaction. We also see that taking on more responsibility, advancing, and growth are all ways to be satisfied at work. We can volunteer for additional responsibility, look for ways to grow our skills, and discover what would be necessary in terms of our performance to take advantage of opportunities for advancement. We might not be able to control company policy or the other factors that can lead to dissatisfaction, but we can certainly control our own work performance.

The factors that tend to bring us the most satisfaction at work, and so we assume, the most motivation, are the ones that we have some control over – and that are most related to our own job performance.

If you happen to be a manager, this information is also important because it shows you how different decisions you make may affect your employees. If you focus on motivation by putting in place factors on the left-hand side, you might relieve dissatisfaction, but you won't necessarily create satisfaction and motivation. Fail to provide opportunities for growth, advancement, additional responsibility, achievement, and recognition, and you will have a team lacking satisfaction – and motivation. This is important to realize – that you have a better chance of achieving motivation when you focus on the individual, not on the traditional 'carrots' (salary, benefits, prestige, etc.) that we tend to think of as motivating us.

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If you are a manager, you have a better chance of achieving motivation when you focus on the individual, not on the traditional 'carrots' (salary, benefits, prestige, etc.) that we tend to think of as motivating us.

3.3 VROOM'S EXPECTANCY THEORY

Another theory of motivation was posed by Victor Vroom. It is different from the previous theory because it focuses not on the needs of a person, but on their outcomes. He saw effort as being the result of motivation, which led to performance and then the resulting outcomes of that performance. He said that in order for a person to be motivated to put forth the effort, he or she must see a link between the three factors – effort, performance, and outcome. He proposed three variables that created the link:

- Expectancy
- Instrumentality
- Valence

Victor Vroom proposed that motivation is directly linked to the expected outcome of any effort that is expended. He defined three variables that created the link: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence.

Figure 2 gives a visual description of this theory, which we will examine further below.

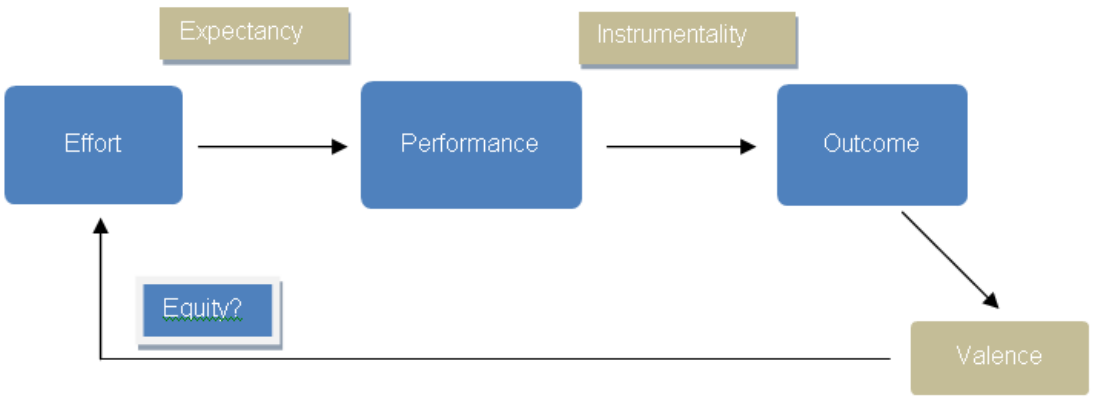

Figure 2: Vroom's Expectancy Theory

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Expectancy means that you believe that the effort you put in can affect the performance that you deliver. For example, if you work harder, you will perform better and if you work less, your performance will suffer. This factor is affected by:

- Having the resources you need to do the job (time, money, hardware or software)
- Having the skills and knowledge to do the job
- Having the support you need to get the job done (manager support, approval, information)

Instrumentality refers to the belief that your performance will affect the outcome. For example, excellent performance will result in a more positive outcome than poor performance. But even more, it is the belief that you will be rewarded for the hard work. You believe there is something in it for you if you perform well. This belief can be affected by:

- Having a clear understanding of what has to be achieved in order to receive a reward – what the 'rules' are for you to get rewarded for your effort
- Trusting the people who will decide whether or not you (or others) receive a reward for a corresponding level of outcome
- Transparency in the process that results in who gets what outcome and corresponding reward

Valence is the importance that a person places on the reward or expected outcome. For example, if I am motivated to spend time with my family more than by money, I will not value an offer of overtime. On the other hand, if money is of utmost importance to me at the moment, I will place a much higher value on that overtime.

So in order for a person to be motivated by what they believe the outcome will be (the reward), all of the following must be true:

- They must believe that their increased effort will increase their performance
- They must believe that their increased performance will increase their reward
- They must value the reward being offered

You'll also notice the box in Figure 2 with 'equity?' indicating that people will compare their outcomes with those received by others and they may adjust their effort accordingly. For example, if I sold 100 widgets and you sold 50 widgets but we both got the same bonus, I will probably reduce my effort the next time around – in other words, I will be less motivated because I will perceive that there was some inequity in the reward structure.

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Under this theory, organizations will have a challenge in motivating every individual because motivation is based on an individual's perceptions of expectancy, instrumentality, valence, and equity in the existing system. However, as individuals, we can apply this theory of motivation to any area of our lives where we need to be motivated. We can create our own rewards for our performance and for achieving our personal goals. Since we would also be in control of the reward system, there would be no chance of not getting the expected reward – unless of course, you don't follow through on your promise to yourself!

As individuals, we can apply this theory of motivation to any area of our lives where we need to be motivated by creating our own rewards for performance and goal achievement.

3.4 MCCLELAND'S NEED-BASED MODEL

David McCleland based his theory of motivation on the idea that each of us has three fundamental needs:

- The need for achievement
- The need for affiliation
- The need for power (authority)

McCleland said that each of us has these three needs in a different balance. These needs affect how we can be motivated as well as how we try to motivate other people. McCleland was particularly interested in understanding people who have a high need to achieve because they are not as common as one might think. Here is a brief explanation of each type of need:

N-ach: Need for achievement:

- Seek achievement
- Strive to attain goals
- Want advancement
- Need feedback
- Need a sense of accomplishment

N-affil: Need for affiliation:

- Need for interaction with others
- Need for friendship
- Want and need to be liked

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N-pow: Need for power:

- Authority motivated
- Need to influence others
- Need to make an impact
- Need to lead
- Need to increase personal prestige or status

McCleland conducted a famous experiment where he asked people to throw rings over a peg, like in a fairway game. There were no instructions given as to where the people had to stand, so people threw the rings from different distances. Yet he noticed that the people who had tested as having a high level of the need to achieve chose their positions carefully – they picked positions that were neither too close nor too far. They chose a distance that was realistic but not too easy. In other words, they seemed to be challenging themselves while still making achievement of the goal a real possibility.

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What McCleland realized about those with a high level of need to achieve is that they set goals at a level where they feel they can influence the outcome and yet where there is still the need to stretch in order to achieve the goal. He also found that these people were more likely to look for ways that a situation could be improved. They believe they have influence and the ability to make a difference.

So what if you are not a naturally achievement-motivated person? If you don't see the achievement of the outcome as reward in itself, you are not alone. Many people are motivated by affiliation or power instead. But McCleland believed that motivation by achievement could be taught and learned. In fact, you are learning some of the ways to become more motivated by realistic goal-setting in this ebook.

3.5 MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Finally, not discussion of theories of motivation would be complete without Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. In 1943, Abraham Maslow published a theory on what motivates people in his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation.* He posited that people have five levels of needs that they seek to meet. The more basic the need, the more motivated a person will be to fulfill it. So using his Hierarchy of Needs, you can begin to assess how strong the motivation factor will be for a group of people or an individual. Figure 3 shows Maslow's hierarchy.

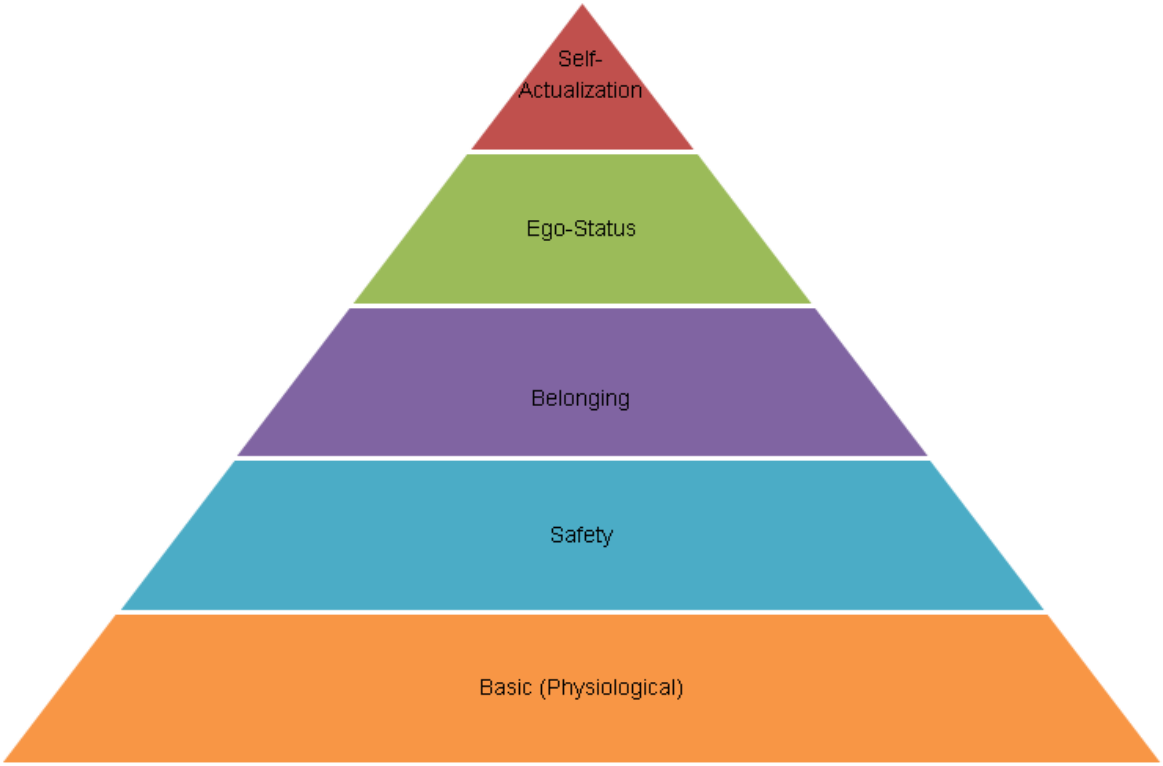

Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

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The bottom four layers of the pyramid Maslow called d-needs or deficiency needs. Failure to meet these needs could result in physical harm in the case of the physiological level. Or if the next three layers of needs are not met, such as lack of security, friendship or love, and self-esteem, the body won't necessarily give physical signs of the deficiency, but the person will be upset, disconnected, anxious, or tense.

Maslow proposed five levels of human needs. The most basic, and therefore the most motivating, are at the bottom of the model.

3.5.1 LEVEL ONE – PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS

The bottom, or most important needs, are the physiological needs. These are just what they sound like – with the exception of clothing and sexual activity, the things that our bodies need in order to keep functioning. These are the things that we will be most motivated to pursue should we experience a lack of them. They include:

- Air
- Food
- Water
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Sexual Activity

3.5.2 LEVEL TWO – SAFETY NEEDS

Once the physical needs have been met, the individual will then focus on making sure that they are safe. These are the things people want in order to create a certain level of predictability and order in the world. It doesn't just mean physical safety, but can also mean general health and well-being, safety from financial ruin, injustice, or having to deal with the stress of the unfamiliar. Other examples related to our professional lives include:

- Job security
- Protection from unilateral authority
- Financial savings
- Insurance policies
- Reasonable accommodations for the disabled

Safety needs are the second level of human need. Meeting these needs helps establish a sense of predictability, order, and well-being.

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3.5.3 LEVEL THREE – BELONGING NEEDS

The third level of human needs revolve around social interactions and the need to belong. These needs will be pursued once the lower needs are met. People will fulfill this need by pursuing individual relationships and by joining larger social organizations. These relationships are emotionally-based and fulfill the need to be loved by, cared, for, and accepted by others.

All human beings need to feel a sense of belonging which will be manifested in a variety of relationships – including those in the workplace.

If these needs are not met, individuals become more at risk for depression, social awkwardness or anxiety, or loneliness. In some cases of extreme peer pressure, individuals may actually sacrifice the lower levels of needs in order to fit in.

People may fulfill this level of need through different relationships, such as:

- Family
- Friends
- Intimate Relationships
- Clubs or Social Organizations
- Sports Teams
- Office Culture
- Religious Groups
- Professional Organizations

3.5.4 LEVEL FOUR – EGO-STATUS

The ego-status needs are related to the belonging needs, but with one major difference. Whereas belonging needs refer to being a part of a group, ego-status needs refer more to how the individual believes she is seen by those groups. We each have a self-image which is at least in part developed by how we believe we appear to others. For example, we believe we are smart, funny, kind, considerate, or any number of different attributes. We also believe that others see us that way. Our needs at this level revolve around us reinforcing our self-image and, by turn, the image others have of us. People will strive to fill this need by such means as:

- Status and achievement at work
- The accumulation of wealth
- The accumulation of 'status symbols' (cars, homes, etc.)

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- Recognition from others
- Taking opportunities to lead others
- Associations with people who have the esteem of others
- Personal achievement in areas such as education, skills, and hobbies
- Pride in the achievements of their family members

The ego-status level of needs related to how we believe others see us and how we see ourselves.

Those with the healthiest sense of self-esteem are those whose esteem is based on their own accomplishments and internal feelings. The more self-esteem is based on external things and associations, the more fragile that esteem is.

Additionally, we perceive a certain 'status' that we have in our groups. This status could be conferred on us literally with a title, such as Director, Manager, Administrator, Chair, Treasurer, or Secretary. It could be an honorary status in the sense of being the person that others come to when they need help or advice. Or it could be that you simply have a certain level of popularity, success, or other achievement that gives you a strong sense of self-esteem and accomplishment. If these needs are not met, the individual may suffer from low self-esteem or an inferiority complex.

Those with the healthiest self-esteem are those whose esteem is based on their own accomplishments and internal feelings.

The more self-esteem is based on external things, the more fragile it is.

3.5.5 LEVEL FIVE – SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Maslow described this level of human need as the desire to become more and more oneself, and to become more and more of what we are capable of becoming. This level of need is related to meeting one's full potential – whatever that might be. The exact need is very individual. For example, one person might have the need to be the perfect parent. Another individual might have the need to become athletically gifted, or another to become artistically expressive.

The need for self-actualization is the need to become more and more oneself, and to become more and more of what we are capable of becoming.

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It's important to realize that this level of need is only achievable when the other four have been met. One must be physically nourished, not have to focus on safety, feel loved and a sense of belonging, and have a good level of self-esteem before he or she would seek this level of desire.

Maslow related two ways of understanding self-actualization that were taught to him by his professor, Dr. Wayne Dyer. They are:

1. To cease caring about the good opinion of others
2. To do things purely because you enjoy them – because they are the reason you are here on earth, not because of money, fame, or any other reason.

The more we are self-actualized, the more we will find that we are motivated by the things in life that make us happy rather than those that we do simply because it is our job or our role. Also, an increase in self-actualization naturally leads to more self-confidence because you feel more secure of yourself in general. If you no longer care about what other people think (generally) and you are doing things that you love, you are affirming your individuality and accepting yourself – faults and all.

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4 METHODS FOR IMPROVING SELF-CONFIDENCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

When we discuss ways of improving self-confidence, we also need to talk about improving self-esteem and self-efficacy, as they are all related concepts. We'll start this chapter by looking at some tools you can put into practice whenever you need a quick confidence boost. Next we'll look at how to build lasting self-confidence through building self-esteem and self-efficacy. By enhancing these attributes, your self-confidence will naturally develop and will show itself in your actions and behaviors. You will no longer have to 'fake it until you make it' – instead you will actually be more self-confident at work and in other areas of your life.

4.2 10 TIPS TO IMPROVE SELF-CONFIDENCE INSTANTLY

There are times when we need to feel more confident to face a situation at work. Maybe you are going to give a major presentation or you want to ask your boss for a raise. You don't necessarily feel as self-confident as you'd like, but you can follow these tips to give you that extra boost of self-confidence you need.

4.2.1 DRESS UP

When you need to feel more confident, pay attention to how you are dressed. When you feel that you look your best, you are more likely to carry yourself with more confidence. You will find it easier to interact with others and you won't be distracted by worrying about how you look. You don't have to spend a great deal of money on a new wardrobe, but you can make a few small changes that can help you to appear 'sharper.' Get a modern haircut, make sure your clothes fit you properly and in a flattering manner, invest in a few great accessories, and make sure you are pressed and polished.

When you feel that you look your best, you are more likely to carry yourself with more confidence.

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4.2.2 STEP UP THE PACE

Next time you're at work, take a moment to watch people and how they are walking. What does their walk communicate about them? Are they walking slowly, trudging along, with their head down? Or do they walk quickly, head up, with a pleasant smile on their face? You can feel more confident by walking with purpose wherever you go. You're on a mission, with places to go and people to see! Walk about 25% faster than you normally would, with your head up and your energy flowing. You will start to feel more important and more confident.

Watch people walking by the next time you're at work. What does their walk communicate about them?

4.2.3 WATCH YOUR POSTURE

Just like with the discussion on walking above, the way you carry your body tells others a lot about how you feel about yourself. Are you slouching, slumping your shoulders, and looking pretty lethargic? Then you're communicating to others that you don't have a lot of self-confidence. Instead, practice good posture. Sit or stand upright with your head up and your shoulders back. Make eye contact with others in a friendly manner. You'll feel more alert, more confident, and more powerful.

Practice good posture to feel more alert, more confident, and more powerful.

4.2.4 PERSONAL ADVERTISEMENT

Let's say you're having a really bad day. You made a mistake on that big presentation, your boss is not happy, and you feel like crawling under a rock until the weekend makes it around. What you need is a way to boost your self-confidence so you can take responsibility for the mistake and get in action around cleaning up any mess. This is where you could really use someone to boost you up with a motivational speech. But since you can't rely on another person to say what you need to hear, you can do it for yourself.

A personal advertisement is a one minute or less speech that you write about yourself and all your strengths and abilities so you can refer to it whenever you need a confidence boost.

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You should have a personal advertisement or commercial that you write about yourself. This is a short speech, less than a minute, which highlights everything that is great about you. You are writing an advertisement about yourself – so focus on your strengths, why you're good at your job, and what you like about yourself. Whenever you have a moment where your self-confidence wanes, you can pull out your personal advertisement and read it to yourself – out loud in a mirror ideally, but you can always read it silently to yourself at your desk. This will help you remember that although you have made a mistake, you are still a great, valuable person with a lot to be proud of.

4.2.5 PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Probably the fastest way to feel bad about yourself is to focus on what you don't have, what you haven't achieved, or to compare yourself to others that you feel have achieved more than you have. If you focus on what you haven't achieved yet, you are bound to start listing your weaknesses as reasons for why you haven't yet achieved those goals.

Instead, practice focusing on gratitude. Every day, write down a list of at least five things that you are proud of accomplishing, or things that you can be grateful for in your life. This could include relationships with people you love, your health, your educational achievements, your professional achievements, and any other positive aspects of your life. You could even keep a list with you in case you ever face a moment where it's really difficult to focus on the positive. If you train yourself to focus on what you have to be grateful for, you will be amazed at how much more confident – and happier in general – you will feel.

Write down at least five things every day that you are grateful for and you will be training yourself to stay focused on the positive in your life and about yourself.

4.2.6 PAY PEOPLE COMPLIMENTS

There is one surefire way to surround ourselves in negativity – that's to gossip about others. When we feel bad about ourselves, we often look for ways to project those feelings onto others by gossiping and insulting them behind their back. Instead, try disengaging from the gossip circle. Everyone has something valuable about them, so focus on that instead. Refuse to gossip about others, but instead, pay them compliments. The more you practice paying sincere compliments to others instead of focusing on their negative attributes you'll be more likely to focus on your own positive attributes as well. By looking for the best in other people, you will bring out the best in yourself.

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Try disengaging from the negative influence of gossip and instead focus on the positive in others by paying them compliments.

4.2.7 SIT UP FRONT

Avoiding the front row is a very common thing. Perhaps it comes from school when we didn't want to be singled out by the teacher – particularly on a day we hadn't completed an assignment. So we sat towards the back, hoping not to be noticed. But at work, sitting towards the back shows either disinterest or a lack of self-confidence. Instead, sit up at the front of the room. You will feel more confident doing this over time as you learn that there is nothing to be uncomfortable about. Plus, it doesn't hurt to put yourself in the eyesight of some important people in your organization.

Sit in the front row to practice allaying fears of being noticed by other people and to start feeling more confident.

4.2.8 SPEAK UP

Many people are nervous about speaking up in group discussions. They may be afraid that others will judge them for what they say and they are concerned about looking bad or feeling stupid. However, we are usually amplifying this fear in our own minds – most of the time, people are much more accepting that we think they are. Particularly because most of the other people are likely dealing with the same fear.

We usually amplify the fear of speaking in front of others in our own mind – particularly because most other people are likely dealing with the same fear.

Make it a game with yourself. Decide that you will speak up at least one time in every group discussion that you're in. You'll find that it gets easier in time. You'll be improving your public speaking skills and will feel more and more confident in sharing your opinions and ideas in front of other people. In fact, in time, you may even begin to be seen as a leader by your peers and supervisors if you continue sharing and contributing to group discussions.

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4.2.9 EXERCISE

Feeling low about yourself? Take a hike. Or a walk, or a bike ride, or go work out in the gym. Not only is exercise a great way to blow of stress, but setting and achieving physical fitness goals is an excellent way to feel better about your abilities. You'll feel proud as you reach each milestone you set for yourself. Plus, you will feel more energized and probably more attractive as well – both of which can help improve your self-confidence.

Exercise not only relieves stress, but achieving your physical fitness goals is an excellent way to feel better about your abilities.

4.2.10 FOCUS ON CONTRIBUTING

In a similar vein to thinking about what you have to be grateful for, another way to keep from focusing on the negative in the world (and about yourself) is to focus on the contributions that you can make to the workplace and to others. When you shift your focus to what you give instead of what you get or how you are perceived, you will stop worrying so much about yourself. Plus, if you can help others or contribute in some positive way, it will simply make you feel good. For all of these reasons, focusing on what you contribute will help to boost your self-confidence.

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When you shift your focus to what you give instead of what you get or how you are perceived, you will stop worrying so much about yourself.

4.3 BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM AT WORK

Self-esteem is an excellent barrier to depression and other negative emotions. Yet it can be difficult to both build and maintain. However, research has shown that the more roles people fill in their lives, the more self-esteem they have. This means that our work role is one opportunity for building self-esteem.

Our work role is an excellent opportunity for building self-esteem, yet the modern workplace also provides challenges to maintaining our self-esteem.

Yet, the modern workplace provides a challenge to maintaining self-esteem. There are several reasons for this, which can vary from workplace to workplace. But some common reasons the workplace can be difficult on our self-esteem are:

- The fast pace of work means we don't always receive acknowledgement for our performance or contribution
- The demands on us for productivity makes us all feel like we can't do enough
- We work incredible amounts of hours that encroach on our 'downtime' and restorative experiences
- Competition is fierce in many workplaces, making it hard to feel we've contributed if we aren't 'number one'
- We may be the receivers of aggression, rudeness, and insensitivity from others due to such a high-pressure environment
- Challenges that arise in cultural and age differences in the workplace can have some workers feeling unappreciated and others 'outdated'

In the face of such challenges to our self-esteem in the workplace, what can we do to help protect ourselves? Following are four strategies to help build your self-esteem at work.

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4.3.1 PURSUE YOUR PASSIONS

One strategy is to pursue your passions every day – even if it's only for fifteen minutes or over your lunch break. Take a few moments to read a favorite book, research your next travel holiday, or touch base with a friend you haven't talked to in quite awhile. Do the same outside of work – make time to watch that old foreign film you've been meaning to see, take a stroll through an art gallery to broaden your view of the art world, or work in the garden planting flowers or vegetables for the coming season.

Take a few moments out of every day to dedicate to something you are passionate about – both at work and at home.

In your work, find something new that you can learn about it. Even if you can dedicate only a few moments a day to learning something new about your job, it can help you to find the passion that you once had for it. Viewing work as a learning experience keeps your mind fresh and allows you to be pleasantly surprised by a job that you may have felt was old and stale.

4.3.2 TRACK YOUR EFFORTS

It's natural to forget what we actually accomplish in a week's time. We all do more than we realize, but we tend to just accept it as second nature and stop noticing it. A great way to help build your self-esteem at work is to keep track of what you actually achieve. Think of it as a personal 'report card.' Take a piece of paper and write it down whenever you give 100% effort to a work task. Try to write down at least three each day. At the end of the week, you'll have 15 different reasons to be proud of yourself for that week.

We all do more than we realize, but we tend to just accept it as second nature and stop noticing it. You can build your self-esteem by keeping track of what you actually achieve.

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4.3.3 SELF-ESTEEM BULLETIN BOARD

Another idea is to create a bulletin board or poster in your work space that details your achievements so that you can see a physical reminder of what you have accomplished. Create a space on a wall that you will see every day and include evidence like a letter from a satisfied customer, a copy of an award certificate, an email of praise from your boss, or a picture of your child graduating from school. You should put anything there that reminds you of the people who love you, the people you love, and the things you have achieved. You should be able to look at it and know that no matter what happens at work, you have a full, rich life and a lot to be proud of. Be sure to update the bulletin board periodically so that you don't stop noticing your special bulletin board.

Create a space on a wall that you will see every day and include evidence like a letter from a satisfied customer, a copy of an award, an email of praise, or a photo of your child graduating from school.

4.3.4 STOP THE NEGATIVE TALK

We all do it. We have that little voice in our heads that only knows how to say negative things. It's our 'inner critic.' However, you have control over that voice. You want to learn to stop the unproductive negative self-talk and instead, focus on what you can do to move past the situation. Focus on how you can solve problems, make a better choice next time, or take any other kind of action that will help you focus on the positive rather than the negative. You can even create a STOP sign and post it on your wall so that every time you have a negative thought you can look up at it and say to yourself, "stop!" Then convert that negative thought into something positive. For example:

"I'm so stupid" becomes *"OK, I made a mistake. Next time I'll know not to do the same."*

"God, I'm hopeless" becomes *"Right, what can I learn from this situation?"*

"I hate this place" becomes *"OK, so right now I'm not very happy with my job. But it will pass."*

Learn to recognize and respond to your 'inner critic' to stop negative self-talk.

Allowing negative thoughts to fester does nothing for your self-esteem and your ability to function at work. Instead, learn to shift quickly from the negative to the positive so you won't get bogged down or beaten up by your inner critic.

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4.4 ENHANCING YOUR SELF-EFFICACY

There are four ways to enhance your self-efficacy that have been well researched and verified as being effective. These four methods come from research done on the treatment of those that are struggling to recover from physical injuries, but they can be applied to your work situation as well. They are:

- Skills mastery
- Modeling
- Reinterpretation of signs and symptoms
- Persuasion

4.4.1 SKILLS MASTERY

The most effective way to build your self-efficacy is by mastering new or existing skills. The more often that you experience success, the more self-efficacy you will gain, and the more often that you experience failure, the more threat your self-efficacy will come under. In fact, repeated, early failures can have a detrimental effect on self-efficacy especially if it was not due to a lack of effort or severe, unusual circumstances.

The more often that you experience success, the more self-efficacy you will gain.

As you master more and more skills, you will find that you suffer occasional failure with much more ease because you know that another success is likely not far behind. When you prove to yourself that you have the ability to master a skill, you will tend to see occasional failures as less a factor of your own lack of skills and more a factor of poor or insufficient strategies. In this case, we see that by improving our strategy we can improve our results.

So how do you begin to build your skills mastery? Simply begin by breaking larger tasks into small, manageable tasks. Then successfully complete each smaller task. Remember that you are aiming for mastery at each smaller task, not just the fastest or easiest way of getting it done. Set a reasonable goal for when you would like to master each piece of the larger overall task and reward yourself as you achieve your goals.

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4.4.2 MODELING

A second means of enhancing self-efficacy is to provide a model for what you are aiming to achieve. Look for someone in your workplace or even in your personal life who has had a similar problem to the one you are attempting to overcome or who is an example of behaviors you would like to emulate. For example, if you are seeking to become a better public speaker, look for someone who is an excellent speaker already. If possible, ask them for advice. Or pay close attention to what it is that makes them good at public speaking and attempt to do the same. If you can, find a mentor who is willing to work with you one-on-one to help you achieve your goal. They can provide inspiration and feedback to help you move towards your goal faster.

Look for someone in your workplace or even in your personal life who has had a similar problem to the one you are attempting to overcome.

4.4.3 REINTERPRETATION OF SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

In the research conducted on patients in physical rehabilitation, this method of building self-efficacy was meant to teach patients which of the signals they were receiving from their body in the form of symptoms were perfectly normal. In the sense of the workplace, however, you should be looking more at what signs and signals you are giving yourself. For example, feeling a high level of stress under high-pressure scenarios is normal. Instead of beating yourself up about it, creating a negative impact on your self-efficacy, recognize that it's a perfectly normal reaction. Then take steps to reduce your stress so that you can keep moving forward.

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Recognize that your emotional signals and symptoms are perfectly normal reactions to your situation, and then determine what you need to do to keep moving forward.

Another example is when you get angry, frustrated, upset, or experience some other negative emotion. Your emotional reactions, sometimes including symptoms like headaches, backaches, or stomach upset, are completely natural when you face upsetting situations. The key is to recognize that you are having the reaction but that it doesn't need to stop you from doing your job and doing it well. Instead, you can acknowledge your emotions and your right to feel them, and still choose the action that will help you move forward in getting your job done. In this sense, we're talking about a form of emotional intelligence, which is another skill that you can learn to practice.

4.4.4 PERSUASION

Persuasion is the final method for enhancing self-efficacy. It is also one that will be familiar to mentors, teachers, trainers, and others who spend their time helping others to learn or improve themselves. In this sense, persuasion means the act of convincing someone that they are actually capable of doing what they have set out to do. The goal is to find interesting ways to persuade yourself that you are capable of achieving the goals that you want to achieve. Some ideas might be giving yourself a pep talk, reminding yourself of your related past successes, or asking others to tell you what they see as your strengths. You can find this kind of persuasion from others that you respect as well, such as a mentor or supervisor.

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5 HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR MOTIVATION

5.1 REASONS WE LOSE MOTIVATION

It's not always easy to stay motivated. We might start out strong, but somewhere along the way we may falter. Even if external factors cooperate – we don't lose our job even though the economy tanks, we have a boss that supports us in reaching for goals and we have colleagues, family, and friends that help to keep us focused, we can still struggle to stay positive and moving forward. It's part of being human to face anxiety, uncertainty, or even depression. But what separates the truly successful person from the average person is the ability to understand why you are feeling de-motivated, respond to that reason, and then keep on moving forward.

What distinguishes the truly successful person from the average person is the ability to understand why you are feeling de-motivated, respond to that reason, and then keep on moving forward.

There are three main reasons that people tend to lose motivation from time to time. You can refer to these as 'motivation killers.' These are:

- **Lack of confidence** – why would you continue to try to do something if you don't believe that you can do it? You would only be setting yourself up for failure. This makes sense – it's actually a form of self-protection when you think about it. But you will need to boost your confidence level if you are going to regenerate your motivation and get back on track.
- **Lack of focus** – you don't know exactly what it is that you want, so why should you take action until you do? Or you might find yourself scattered across so many different goals that you are finding it difficult to complete any of them. You may need to concentrate your efforts so that you can begin making achievements – even if they are small – which will encourage you to move on to the next goal and the next and so on.
- **Lack of direction** – if you know what you want and you believe that you can do it, but you just don't know how to get started, you can get stopped instead of motivated. But sometimes just staying in action can be important – even if you aren't exactly sure which actions to take. The good news is that if you can educate yourself on the necessary steps, you should be able to restore your motivation.

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In the following sections we will examine how to improve our self-motivation by addressing each of these 'motivation killers.'

5.1.1 ADDRESSING LACK OF CONFIDENCE

We've already spent a great deal of time in this ebook looking at ways to address your lack of confidence, but there are a few more pointers to include here. Some additional suggestions include:

- Focusing on what you already have rather than what you lack
- Create your own personal positive mantra that you can tell yourself to boost yourself up
- Repeat things that you already know to help remind yourself of what you've already achieved
- Think positively even if you don't yet believe what you are telling yourself – eventually, you may start to believe it
- Learn to accept a compliment from others – and actually enjoy the feedback

5.1.2 ADDRESSING LACK OF FOCUS

It's so easy to lose focus on what we are trying to achieve in today's busy work environment. There is so much going on that we can get anxious, distracted, and lose our ability to focus. We end up suffering from what is called 'fear-based' thinking. We are afraid to lose our jobs because we are afraid of being poor. We are afraid to speak our mind in a meeting because we are afraid others won't like what we have to say and they will hold it against us in our relationship with them. We are afraid of taking a risk at work because we can't guarantee that the outcome will be positive.

It's easy to succumb to a lack of focus when we engage in 'fear-based' thinking.

This kind of fear scatters our focus and makes it difficult to achieve anything because we get stopped by the fear. We can spend a great deal of time worrying about all the possible bad things that can happen to us or all the things that could possibly go wrong. The way to defeat your lack of focus is to set goals for yourself that are clear and achievable. The very act of setting goals puts some structure around your random thoughts and gives you something specific to focus on. Instead of worrying about random possible events in the future, you can focus on what you can do at the moment to improve your situation.

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5.1.3 ADDRESSING LACK OF DIRECTION

Let's say that you have developed your goals so that you have something to focus on, and you feel pretty confident that you can achieve the goal. But still you find it difficult to find the direction that you need. You might be procrastinating instead. This motivation-killer can be a difficult one to overcome, but it is not impossible. It requires taking your goal and breaking it down into the daily strategy that you will use to achieve it. You should literally have steps written down in 'to-do' lists so that you have specific tasks to focus on each day. When you sit down to work, pull out your to-do list and get started and you will find that you now have a clear direction to move forward in.

5.2 BUILDING SELF-DISCIPLINE

For some of us, discipline is a dirty word. We conjure up images of a task master cracking his whip or a drill sergeant yelling at his soldiers. But believe it or not, self-discipline actually offers you a sort of freedom. When you have the discipline to continue reaching for your goals despite how you are feeling at the moment, you will enjoy all the results of that effort and the time that it creates for you. If you lack self-discipline, you may be aimless, wandering, starting one thing without finishing it and moving on to something else. You may get frustrated and find that you aren't able to reach your goals even though it feels like you are trying to do so.

Self-discipline requires the ability to act according to what you are thinking rather than what you are feeling at the time.

Self-discipline requires the ability to act according to what you are thinking rather than what you are feeling at the time. Sure, we have days when we don't want to go to work, but we know that if we don't, there will be consequences. We might lose the day's pay – or even lose the job – which would have its own consequences. The same is true when we lack self-discipline in reaching for our goals. The consequences are varied, depending on what the goal might be. If I am not practicing the piano, I'm wasting the money I'm spending on lessons and I also have the consequence of not being able to play the instrument. If I am not exercising self-discipline towards a task at work, the consequence may be that I don't get as high a commission as I had hoped for, or I might not be chosen for that promotion I want.

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Self-discipline helps you with things like:

- Working on your daily tasks even if you don't particularly feel like it
- Going to the gym even though you'd rather sit at home and watch a movie
- Waking up early to truly prepare for the day ahead even though you want that last 30 minutes of sleep
- Turning away temptation when you've committed to a healthy eating plan
- Checking your email at specific times during the day rather than every time you get a new email – something which helps keep you productive at work
- Walking away from time-sucking gossip at the water cooler even though you'd rather hear the scoop
- Checking your work meticulously even though you feel like it's 'good enough' as it is

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There are five basic characteristics of people who possess self-discipline:

- Self-knowledge
- Conscious awareness
- Commitment
- Courage
- Internal coaching

As we look at each of these traits, keep in mind that you don't have to be born having these characteristics. You can learn to be more self-disciplined by practicing each of these aspects.

5.2.1 SELF-KNOWLEDGE

If self-discipline requires that you act according to what you think is best rather than how you feel at the moment, then you need to know enough about yourself and your goals to understand what the best course of action is for you. You need to determine what kind of behavior, choices, standards, goals, and values are the best choices for you and your future. In order to do so, you need to take the time to get to know what is important to you. Try writing out a list of your goals or dreams, or even write a personal mission statement. This will help you decide how to structure your time and efforts when you have to make choices between options.

Self-knowledge will help you understand what is important to you and to identify the areas where you'll want to spend the most time and energy.

5.2.2 CONSCIOUS AWARENESS

Now you've looked at yourself and identified what is important to you. But before you can become more disciplined, you need to pay attention to what you are already doing and not doing. Where are you using your time well? Where are you wasting it? Where are you spending time on things that aren't really important to you and aren't of value to you or the organization? Until you know where your behavior is undisciplined, you won't know what areas you can improve upon. The better you get at identifying the areas where you lack discipline, the faster you will get at nipping that unproductive behavior in the bud. Eventually you'll get to the point where you can stop undisciplined behavior before it happens.

Before you can become more disciplined, you need to pay attention to what you are already doing and not doing.

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5.2.3 COMMITMENT

Without commitment to your goals and values, your self-discipline won't last. The first time that a temptation comes along to take you away from your goal-driven activity, it is your commitment to your goal that will keep you going on the right path. If you find that you can't commit to a goal that you've set for yourself, go back to the self-knowledge step. Perhaps you have attempted to instill discipline around a goal that you don't actually want. We may think we should want to reach a goal, say, at work we might think we should want a promotion, but perhaps we aren't committed to it because deep-down, we don't really want it. We might be happy where we are, or maybe we actually want to change careers entirely. Though commitment can take work, you can also tell a lot about what is truly important to you by how strong your commitment is.

Self-discipline won't last if you aren't truly committed to the goals that you are pursuing. If you find that commitment is wavering, you might need to go back to the self-knowledge step and make sure that your goal is something you truly want.

5.2.4 COURAGE

Standing up for something that is important to you in the face of all of the challenges and temptations that we face in life takes a great deal of courage. You may have to negotiate with your spouse or other loved ones to pursue your goal, such as if you decide you want to go back to school at night. Or, you might have to change your behavior that others have come to expect from you. For example, maybe you've always been the life of the party and now you have decided to focus on eating right, limiting alcohol, and getting a full-night's sleep every night, so your friends start wondering who you are. There's no guarantee that self-discipline will be easy. But if you are committed to something important to you, you'll need to find the courage to say 'no' to things that attempt to dissuade you from your course.

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5.2.5 INTERNAL COACHING

The self-disciplined person also needs to discipline the negative voice that is in their head. As we talked about before, we all have an internal critic. So when you face a challenge to your self-discipline, that critic will start shouting things at you like, "See, I knew you couldn't do it!" or "Go on, just skip the gym this one time!" Instead, you want to start training that 'internal critic' to become your 'internal coach.' You should practice cheering yourself on, encouraging yourself, and reassuring yourself that you are making the right choices. Think about how you would talk to a friend or child you were encouraging to achieve their goals, and be at least that kind and supportive to yourself!

To help your self-discipline, you'll need to turn that 'internal critic' into your 'internal coach.'

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6 PERSONAL CHANGE AND GOAL SETTING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

When we are motivated to make changes in our lives, there are certain steps or phases that are common. You'll want to understand the factors involved in change and how to take action to strengthen your chance for success. In this chapter we'll look at a formula for personal change, common steps when going through a change, and then how to set goals that will help guide your success.

6.2 A FORMULA FOR MAKING CHANGES

Another way of looking at motivation and how it is involved in making changes is demonstrated by the formula in Figure 4.

$$C = D \times M \times P$$

C stands for Motivation to Change

D stands for Dissatisfaction

M stands for Model

P stands for Process

Figure 4: A Formula for Motivation to Change

The translation of the formula is that motivation to change occurs when you have a level of dissatisfaction with the way things are, a model for how you want them to look instead, and a plan or process for getting to that model result. When you are not happy with how things are at the moment, you will want to change them. But unless you have a vision for how you would prefer things to look and a way that you believe will get you there, you are unlikely to be truly motivated to make a change. Think for a moment about what this equation says about change:

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- In any case of change, all three elements (D, M, and P) must be present. If any of them are absent (=0), change will be zero.
- When the amount of motivation to change is high, the amount of at least one of the elements on the other side of the equation must be high if the equation is going to balance out (if change is going to be successful).
- Alternatively, if any one of the elements on the right hand side of the equation is high enough, change will eventually be brought about.

The equation means that motivation to change comes from having a level of dissatisfaction with the status quo, a vision for something better, and a plan for how to get there.

You may may have an idea for a change, but if dissatisfaction with the current way of doing things is not there, you're not going to be motivated to take the steps necessary to make the change happen. If you lack the model for what you want things to look like, you will have nothing to direct your activity towards. And if you have the dissatisfaction and the model idea but no way to get there, how would you even beging to make the change? All three of the elements need to be present for change to take place and be successful.

6.3 THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Figure 5 demonstrates the general process of change that an individual goes through, from denial, to resistance, to exploration, to commitment.

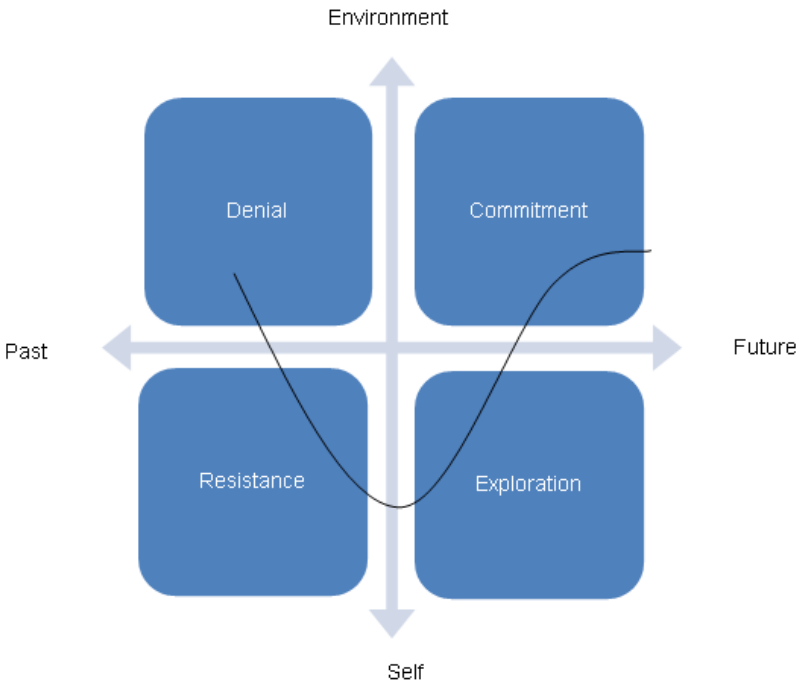

Figure 5: The Process of Change

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6.3.1 DENIAL

The process begins by the change being identified or suggested. There may be a general attitude of denial. Thoughts arise such as 'this isn't necessary,' 'the way I've always done things works just fine.' In this way, the focus is on the past. You have a kind of 'if it's not broke, don't fix it,' attitude. You might still be in denial of the need for the change.

Other emotions you might experience could include:

- Shock
- Discouragement
- Disbelief
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Grieving
- Uncertainty
- Immobilization

6.3.2 RESISTANCE

At this point you might feel resistant to the change. You might start wondering what you are doing and your motivation to make the change will be absent or will lapse. It will take being attentive to what is happening inside your head in order to successfully overcome your resistance. Some of the behaviors or 'symptoms' you might experience at this stage could include:

- Suffering, anger, or stress
- Loss of productivity
- Confusion over roles and future
- Self-sabotage of the change
- Bargaining
- Loss of commitment
- Lethargy

6.3.3 EXPLORATION

The next stage occurs when you begin to accept that the future will involve the change. You now begin to consider what the change will actually mean to your life and lifestyle. You may begin enjoying some of the benefits of the change, even if you're not completely convinced yet that this is something you can do. This is a sort of learning phase for you.

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At this stage you should try to focus on the good side of the change. What will the strengths of the new change be? Will you be able to speak a language you couldn't before? If it's at work, will the change position you to be stronger against the competition in the future, which will in turn foster job security? What benefits and opportunities will there be that there haven't been before the change?

6.3.4 COMMITMENT

In the final stage of the change process, you have become committed to the change and to the remainder of the process in getting there. The commitment is now part of the 'environment' in which you are operating and is becoming the norm. You may even find that you are becoming a model for others.

6.4 SETTING GOALS

To maintain motivation, we need to have goals to focus on. Yet there is an art to goal setting. There is one method that has stood the test of time – the SMART method. Although there have been variations to what the acronym stands for over time, the main definition of a SMART goal is one that is:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

6.4.1 SPECIFIC

When a goal is specific, then you have clearly identified what it is that you expect to be accomplished. If you can't say specifically what you want to achieve, then how can you expect yourself to achieve it? A specific goal will answer the questions:

- Who? Who is taking action or is affected?
- What? What is the result I want to achieve?
- Where? Is there a specific location?
- When? When do I want to complete this goal?
- Which? Are there restraints or requirements that have to be met?
- Why? Why is this important? What specifically is the benefit of achieving this goal?

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For example, let's say that you want to improve customer relations. That's not specific enough. If you answer the questions above, however, it becomes much more specific:

- Who – customers whose accounts I am assigned to (currently 750)
- What – I want to be the person that my customers think of first when they need to talk to someone about internet technology. I will know this is happening when I receive at least 20% more inbound customer calls each month. I will email and then call all 750 customers to re-introduce myself and our services.
- Where – In the five states where I currently have customers.
- When – Within six months.
- Which – Starting with customers that I haven't heard from in more than a year.
- Why – To increase sales, reduce customer complaints, and increase customer satisfaction.

6.4.2 MEASURABLE

Each goal that you set should be measurable so that you have a means of ascertaining how far along you are in reaching the goal as well as when the goal will be complete. If you have a measure for the entire project, as in our example above of reaching 750 customers, then you can also determine how much of your daily work load should be dedicated to achieving the goal.

So, for our example above, 750 customers need to be emailed and then called in enough time that we see a 20% increase in the amount of inbound calls within six months. Of course, that means that we should complete our outgoing contacts as soon as possible in order to allow time for the customers to respond. Let's assume that we can complete 50 emails in a day in addition to maintaining normal customer service. Then we know that we can email everyone in 15 workdays or three weeks. But, we might not want to wait three weeks between emailing and calling. So let's say we decide to alternate emailing and calling.

In the first week, we decide to only email 100 people. The second week, we call those 100 people. Then we alternate doing the same thing over the following weeks until we have completed our list. Not only do we now have a measurable goal, but we've determined the work that needs to take place in order to achieve that goal and how we need to implement that work into our regular routine so that we have the best chance of success.

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To find the measures for your goal, ask the questions:

- How much?
- How many?
- How often?

Or, just answer the question, "How will I know when I've reached my goal?"

6.4.3 ATTAINABLE

As we saw in the last section, having a measure for your goals lets you plan the work that is necessary to achieve the goal. But before you begin working, you need to be certain that the goal is truly attainable. What if in our example above we had said that we wanted to see a 20% increase in inbound calls in just six weeks? How would our plan for reaching the goal have changed? Given our existing resources and the workload that we have to maintain while reaching for the goal, would that even have been possible? If a goal is not attainable given the constraints that you face, you either need to work towards removing those restraints or lowering the level of the goal so that it becomes attainable.

6.4.4 REALISTIC

If a goal is to be realistic, it must be something that you are willing and able to work towards. This doesn't mean that all your goals have to be low and simple. It just means that you have done a thorough analysis of the task at hand and you have come to the conclusion that the goal is realistic. Some questions you could ask yourself during this analysis include:

- Do I have the resources (financial, personnel, equipment, etc.) to reach the goal?
- Do I have the support of others?
- What knowledge or expertise am I lacking that I will need to locate or learn?
- Have I prioritized this new goal with existing goals?

In some version of SMART goals, the R actually stands for 'relevant.' In this case, you are comparing the goal to the overall mission of the organization and to your personal goals, objectives, and roles. Is the goal something that you should actually be completing or is it better suited for someone else? Will it improve your overall skills and ability to do your job? If not, why are you pursuing it?

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6.4.5 TIMELY

The final component of the SMART goals strategy is 'timely.' Without adding a time restriction to your goals, you don't have the necessary motivation to get going as soon as possible. Adding a realistic time boundary lends a sense of urgency to your goal and will help to keep you focused. Since organizations and people change regularly, so can goals. Making sure your goal is set with a time limit also ensures that you complete the goal while it is still relevant to what you are doing on the job or in your personal life.

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